



DRIVE TORIES OUT

EU crisis provides more opportunities to get rid of Johnson >>Pages 4&6



POSTAL WORKERS PREPARE FIGHT

As national strike looms, union activists say we need swift action >>Page 20



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CATALONIA, CHILE, LEBANON, HAITI, HONG KONG, IRAQ



FIGHTING THE police on the streets of Barcelona

Picture: PA

JOIN THE GLOBAL REVOLT

STRUGGLES ACROSS THE WORLD >>PAGES 5,8 and 16

LEBANON

Movement demands fall of government

PROTESTERS IN Lebanon are calling for “revolution”. They are demanding an end to corruption and poverty—and the fall of the government.

Hundreds of thousands of people across Lebanon have taken to the streets since Thursday of last week.

They say they’ll accept nothing less than the end of the government of prime minister Saad Hariri—and an entirely new political system.

Protests began after the government imposed a new tax on phone calls made via messaging app WhatsApp.

The tax sparked anger in a country with high youth unemployment and where austerity has ravaged



On a barricade in Beirut

basic public services. The government quickly scrapped the WhatsApp tax.

But by then the movement had developed much bigger demands.

People accuse Lebanon’s ruling politicians of enriching themselves while trying to make ordinary people pay for the country’s economic crisis.

One young protester told the Al Jazeera news channel, “There’s no future for us, no jobs at all, and this is not acceptable anymore.”

“We have shut up for a long time—and now it’s time to talk.”

Another protester said, “The regime must be toppled from the top of the pyramid. It’s not >>turn to page 3



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'I'm fed up. It's been a complete waste of time. And it's spoilt my birthday'

Tory MP **Peter Bone** was not happy there was no vote on Boris Johnson's Brexit deal on Saturday

'My mum, a teacher at the local comp, once took me through a picket line so she could teach me. She was the only teacher in that day, I was the only pupil'

Spectator editor **Fraser Nelson** celebrates a lifetime of being a scab. Though some people he went to school with are suggesting it may be a Tory fantasy

'We will do everything in our conscience to protect the lives of the unborn'

DUP leaders **Arlene Foster** failing to stop abortion rights

'The thing about politicians is no one really feels any sympathy for them'

The Daily Mail's **Sarah Vine** who is married to Michael Gove



Fresh questions for Prince Andrew over Epstein abuse

PRINCE ANDREW met Jeffrey Epstein, the billionaire paedophile, at least ten times over the course of their 12-year friendship, according to an investigator.

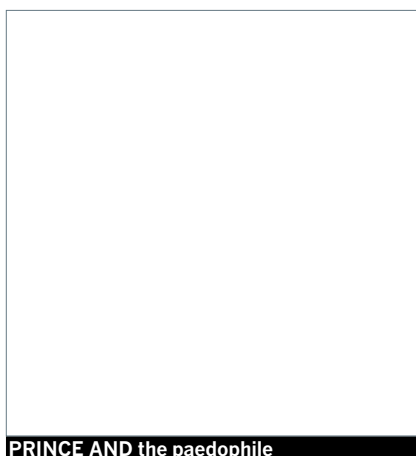
Mike Fisten, a former police detective sergeant in Florida, claims Epstein had up to 13 phone numbers for the queen's second son.

Fisten, now a private investigator who pursued Epstein for more than a decade on behalf of his victims, said he found an address book at the billionaire's home in Palm Beach, Florida, that was "a treasure trove of Jeffrey's activities".

He said of the address book, "It really took us out of south Florida and took us around the globe.

"For instance, if looking at the section in London, you could pick out the Duke of York, which is Prince Andrew. And when you look at that, under Duke of York, it shows Buckingham Palace, London. He has 13 phone numbers to contact the duke."

A Channel 4 Dispatches programme



PRINCE AND the paedophile

shed new light on Andrew's friendship with Epstein on Monday night.

Epstein apparently took his own life in August after being charged with sex trafficking offences involving girls as young as 14.

Virginia Roberts, the woman who was forced to have sex with Andrew, went to

a New York hospital suffering from vaginal bleeding three months later, according to her medical records.

Roberts has alleged she had a series of sexual encounters with the duke, which he denies, culminating in what she has said was a sex party on a Caribbean island owned by Epstein.

She said she had sex with Andrew in London and New York and in Epstein's bolthole in the US Virgin Islands in March and April of 2001.

Medical records reveal that Roberts, then 18, checked into a hospital on 9 July that year.

She told a US court in 2015 that her encounter on the island with Andrew was the third time she had sex with him.

This is the first time her subsequent medical condition has been revealed.

She had endured "irregular vaginal bleeding" over three weeks, as well as "dizziness, nausea, vomiting" and "sharp, low abdominal pain", the medical records show.

The royal family deny any wrongdoing.

AT HARRODS Christmas is for those with very rich parents. One customer of the London shop who tried to buy a ticket for his child to visit Santa Claus claimed that he was told he needed to have spent £15,000 there this year. The store restricts tickets to customers who have attained the status of "green tier 2", which requires a minimum spend of £2,000. It reserves other tickets for bigger spends.



Harrods santa

DOORBELLS DESIGNED to prevent crime are having the opposite effect as thieves rip them off the door frame and sell them on. The devices have a camera that records visitors as they approach. Amazon has been doing sweetheart deals with police forces to flog them to people raising privacy concerns.

Ukipers turn on each other again

UKIP LEADER Richard Braine is fighting to stay leader after the party's national executive committee (NEC) and chair tried to suspend him last week.

Braine said he didn't "really accept" that the chair, Kirstan Herriot, "has the authority" to suspend him. He has only been in the post since August.

The move comes after Braine refused to attend Ukip's annual conference last month, citing a low turnout. Herriot had complained that this was a "complete insult" to Ukip members.

It isn't the first time that Ukip's NEC has tried to get rid of leaders. Last



Ukip's Braine

year, it passed a vote of no confidence in then leader Henry Bolton, eventually forcing him out.

In 2016, it ruled that Steven Woolfe, who was then favourite to be the next leader, couldn't stand.

Former Ukip leader Nigel Farage allegedly manoeuvred behind the scenes to abolish the NEC.

£250,000 for top cop after Grainger killing

A TOP cop accused of lying to a public inquiry trousered more than £250,000 in wages and pension contributions while "off sick".

Assistant chief constable Steve Heywood never returned to work after giving evidence to the inquiry into the police killing of Anthony Grainger. He oversaw the operation in 2012.

The inquiry report slammed his evidence, which "lacked candour".

He added detail into his "contemporaneous" log that he could not have known at the time.



Heywood was allowed to retire from the force in October 2018.

In between giving his evidence in March 2017 and then he received £259,000 in pay and pension contributions.

Heywood was "less than completely truthful" and had been "disingenuous", according to the inquiry report.

Greater Manchester Police said no date had yet been fixed for Heywood's gross misconduct hearing, which he is not compelled to attend.

HILLSBOROUGH

Duckenfield 'had chance' to change plan

DAVID Duckenfield "had the opportunity" to change police planning for the 1989 football match between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest at Hillsborough, a court has heard.

Some 96 Liverpool fans died as a result of a crush in two pens at the ground on the day of the match.

Duckenfield was South Yorkshire Police (SYP) match commander. He denies 95 counts of gross negligence manslaughter in relation to the disaster.

Former SYP inspector Stephen Sewell told Duckenfield's retrial in Preston last week that Duckenfield could "alter anything" in the police planning for the match.

The court heard that Duckenfield had taken up his new role just weeks before the disaster.

Sewell said that the police operational order used for the match was similar to one used the previous year. It did not include specific



Hillsborough memorial

instructions for monitoring the number of fans in pens. Sewell said Duckenfield did not make any significant changes to it.

Earlier last week, former SYP sergeant Michael Goddard said new match commanders weren't trained.

When asked what kind of learning curve Duckenfield would have faced, Goddard said that it was "Mount Everest—it couldn't be done".

Duckenfield gave an order to open a gate to the ground to relieve a crush that had built up outside the Leppings Lane turnstiles. Many fans went down a tunnel into pens 3 and 4, where the fatal crushing occurred.

Former SYP chief inspector Robert McRobbie told the court that Duckenfield made the order to prevent "loss of life" or injuries outside the ground.

The trial continues.

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Ready for battle at Stand Up To Racism conference

by NICK CLARK

A MAJOR conference debated how to fight racism as the prospect of a general election campaign against Boris Johnson looms. Hundreds of people joined the Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) conference in central London on Saturday.

Journalist Gary Younge said that activists should “not just fight racism but understand racism as part of a broader economic problem”.

David Rosenberg from the Jewish Socialists Group described how fascists use antisemitic conspiracy theories to tie together hatreds of different people.

Speakers from Germany, the US, Greece and Ukraine spoke about how they're fighting the far right in their countries.

There was debate on the European Union (EU).

Petros Constantinou from Greek anti-fascist organisation Keerfa said the EU has sent 10,000 border guards to keep refugees out of Europe.

Labour MEP Claude Moraes said EU racism was “part of a continuum”.

RMT union assistant general secretary Steve Hedley said remaining in the EU would stop a Labour government from implementing its pledges.

NEU union joint general secretary Kevin Courtney called for uniting Leave and Remain supporters against racism.

Debate

Another debate looked at a campaign against LGBT+ education in Birmingham primary schools that involved Muslim parents.

Talha Ahmad from the Muslim Council of Britain said, “Challenging racism, Islamophobia, homophobia and antisemitism is up to us all.”

He later said, “When the media focusses on a small Muslim community in Birmingham they're not there



ACTIVISTS AT the Stand Up To Racism conference in London

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN



Gary Younge speaking at the conference

to stand up for LGBT people.”

Nahella Ashraf from SUTR said, “Let's talk about what unites us.”

Another discussion looked at the media. Balwinder from west London talked about a serious racist attack and a terrific protest against it.

“All the London media reported the attack but no one reported our demo,” he said.

Sophia Rana, a city councillor from Oslo, in Norway, said, “The far right recently organised a protest in the most multicultural area of my city.”

“The mainstream parties, including Labour, said we shouldn't have a counter-protest because everybody has ‘freedom of speech’.”

Labour shadow home secretary Diane Abbott said a Jeremy Corbyn government would “genuinely stand up to racism and not use immigrants as some kind of scapegoat”.

Other speakers talked about building a mass, non-party political anti-racist campaign. SUTR co-convenor Weyman Bennett said, “It's going to be the dirtiest general election campaign we've seen.”

“We need a movement that makes sure we defend anti-racist values.”

More online

For a longer version go to bit.ly/SUTRconf



>>from front page

useful if just one goes away.”

The protests are the largest in Lebanon since 2005. They have drawn onto the streets people of all ages and from many different backgrounds across the country.

This is significant in a country whose political system is divided along religious lines.

Protesters have blocked roads with burning tyres, and surrounded the offices of president Michel Aoun.

Police attacked the demonstrations late on Friday of last week in an attempt to clear the roads. Groups of protesters fought back, and others smashed shop windows in affluent areas of capital city Beirut.

Hizbollah—a political movement which grew among impoverished Shia Muslims due to its resistance to imperialism and Western-backed governments—opposed the protests. It is a major part of the ruling “national unity” coalition.

Hizbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah effectively told protesters their demands for fundamental change were impossible. He said calls for the end of the government were a “waste of time”.

Sympathise

Meanwhile the Western-backed Hariri claimed to sympathise with the protesters. The prime minister blamed Lebanon's economic crisis on groups in the government who he said blocked “reforms” that would encourage £9 billion in foreign investments.

The government passed a package of reforms on Monday.

These included cuts to politicians' salaries, an increased tax on bank profits, more money for social security and some anti-corruption laws.

But they also included plans to cut government spending and privatise the telecoms industry.

The mass demonstrations looked likely to continue.

Protesters in Beirut chanted “Revolution, revolution,” and “We want the fall of the regime” after Hariri announced his reforms.

One protester, Maya Mhana, said, “We are remaining in the streets—we don't believe a single word.”

Socialist Worker Appeal to raise £125,000

Socialist Worker is the voice of people fighting for a better world. It dispels the racist scapegoating and anti-working class rhetoric of the mainstream press.

We publish stories of the strikes, protests and pickets that can beat the bosses and bigots. We are asking everyone who enjoys Socialist Worker to donate as much as they can and help fund the resistance.

I SUPPORT THE APPEAL BECAUSE...

When the mainstream media is so intent on ignoring the climate crisis and the efforts of XR, it's important and refreshing to know that Socialist Worker supports the movement. As it also features articles about other protest

movements across the world it really helps to contextualise this struggle on a global scale, and highlights the importance of justice across the world.

Heidi Henders —
Extinction Rebellion activist

To donate go to socialistworker.co.uk/appeal

Call 020 7840 5607 or send a cheque, payable to 'SW Appeal' to PO Box 74955, London E16 9EJ



£125,000

£100,000

Total so far
£70,340

£50,000

£25,000



The EU is a bad answer to a racist, neoliberal Brexit deal

by CHARLIE KIMBER

BORIS JOHNSON'S rotten deal with the European Union (EU) faced key tests in parliament this week.

MPs were voting on the principle of backing the withdrawal agreement bill as Socialist Worker went to press.

Another vote was scheduled on how much debate would be allowed on the details.

If enough MPs backed Johnson on both of these then it was possible that the plan could be rammed through the Commons by Thursday and go to the House of Lords this weekend.

Johnson has been forced to send a letter to EU leaders asking for an extension to the Brexit deadline.

But Britain could still leave the EU by Thursday of next week.

However, MPs from several parties were likely to table a string of amendments seeking to tweak the deal.

They include pushing the government to negotiate a customs union with the EU and to hold a second referendum.

If such an amendment passed, the Tories would have to accept it or make another bid for a general election. There are good reasons to be against the deal.

It leads towards an end to workers' freedom of movement and clears the way for an even harsher set of anti-migrant laws than presently exist.

Transition

It keeps the EU single market's neoliberal competition and state-aid rules for a long transition period after Britain leaves.

But it also takes away the fig leaf of concern over workers' rights, equality and environmental protection that was in Theresa May's version.

It no longer guarantees that there will be a "level playing field" with EU regulations.

All such rights are put in the context of "open and fair competition".

BACK STORY

The deal keeps EU law in Britain throughout a transition period which will last until December 2020—and possibly longer

● It keeps the neoliberal parts of EU law and will end freedom of movement

● It accepts paying £39 billion of divorce payments to the EU

● It will set up customs checks between Britain and Northern Ireland

● It will lead to over a year of talks about a future trade deal—which will be more complex than the decisions so far

The government insists it will offer EU nationals already in Britain the right to live and work here. But there are serious doubts about what would happen to those who do not complete the registration scheme.

Ministers say most people have registered, but serious questions remain about such figures.

Scheme

The official statistics show the total number of applications received under the scheme, and not the total of applicants.

There are large numbers of re-applications due to being rejected for some bureaucratic reason.

That means many EU nationals may not register by the deadline—and might eventually be deported.

The bad reason to be against the deal is because it diverges from EU customs and market regulations and "harms business".

These EU rules are a machine for privatisation and curbing government spending. They should be junked.

The alternative to Johnson's deal is not endless manoeuvres or posing as the bosses' best friends.

It is to fight to get the Tories out.

On other pages...

Johnson faces a crisis—but he isn't finished>>>Page 6

THE PEOPLE'S Vote march—not progressive

Leading left Labour figures fall in behind the right's push for Remain

THE LABOUR Party has taken a big step towards full support for remaining in the racist, neoliberal European Union.

High profile Labour politicians close to leader Jeremy Corbyn spoke at the People's Vote campaign march on Saturday—really a march for Remain.

Shadow foreign secretary Emily Thornberry told the crowd, "Labour is a Remain Party."

It flew in the face of a decision by ordinary Labour members at their party conference just last month to reject campaigning for Remain.

Other speakers even closer to Corbyn—shadow chancellor John McDonnell and shadow home secretary Diane Abbott—were more careful.

But they also edged Labour closer to backing Remain.

McDonnell said Labour would respect another vote to Leave but that "we believe that our future best lies within the European Union itself". Abbott simply said, "I am a Remainer."

A big shift is underway to push

second referendum—in which Starmer says Labour should back Remain—before a general election.

Some Labour politicians opposed the shift—though Corbyn stayed silent.

Party chair Ian Lavery MP tweeted that Labour "is NOT a Remain Party, it's NOT a Leave Party. It's a SOCIALIST Party."

Others highlighted a mass rally for Corbyn in Liverpool as proof that Labour can win an election.

Yet simply holding rallies of Labour activists while Labour's top politicians faff around with the right wing Remain campaign isn't a good enough alternative.

The rallies need to be much more like the ones during the 2017 general election—widely advertised to draw in much broader numbers of people, not just Labour activists.

Crucially they need to be part of an election campaign that puts action over austerity, the climate crisis and racism—not Brexit—at its centre.

He is against comprehensive education and against LGBT+ education.

He is against comprehensive education and against LGBT+ education.

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He is against comprehensive education and against LGBT+ education.

DUP—Don't Undertake Pact with these bigots

THE BIGOTS of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) tried to recall the Stormont Assembly in Northern Ireland for the first time in two and half years on Monday.

They wanted to complain about abortion rights and LGBT+ people.

The abortion law changed in Northern Ireland at midnight on Monday.

MPs at Westminster successfully amended a bill in the summer to include measures to end the near blanket prohibition on abortion and introduce same sex marriage.

The sitting was merely symbolic, as the Assembly cannot perform any functions without an executive in place. That isn't happening soon, and the other parties aren't turning up.

The last time the Assembly sat was March 2017 after a snap election caused by the implosion of the devolved institutions over an energy corruption scandal.

They took the register then went home.

The energy scam cost hundreds of millions of pounds. Businesses could earn more money by burning more fuel.

But the DUP isn't just corrupt—

it is nasty. It has propped up the Tory government since June 2017. But it's been abandoned by Boris Johnson.

The DUP had built up a close relationship with the most Eurosceptic bits of the Tory party.

It invited Johnson to the annual DUP conference last year, believing he would bolster grassroots confidence after Theresa May's torrid attempts to get her deals through.

Johnson stood alongside DUP leaders at the Conservative conference just weeks ago, cheered to the

rafters by hundreds of delegates at the DUP's fringe event.

But he has ignored the party to try and get a deal through parliament.

Northern Unionists crying betrayal from Westminster is as traditional as the routes of their anti-Catholic marches.

And so it was in parliament last Saturday when Jim Shannon, a DUP MP, shouted at Johnson, "Sellout! Treachery! Betrayal!"

A real betrayal would be Labour doing a deal with these bigots.

Simon Basketter

Who is vile Sammy Wilson?

THE DUP'S Brexit spokesman Sammy Wilson is on the news a lot. He's the man who the Labour Party has considered doing deals with.

In a debate on Brexit when a member of the public said they wanted to "get the ethnics out," Wilson replied, "You are absolutely right."

After a racist attack against Romanians in Belfast, Wilson responded by saying, "Charges of racism were always coincided with the holding out of the hand for more money".

He also pronounced about Catholics that, "Taigs don't pay rates."

And when talking about Catholic voters in Belfast he said, "They are

When he was mayor of Belfast he said, "I don't care if gays are ratepayers. As far as I am concerned they are perverts."

He also pronounced about Catholics that, "Taigs don't pay rates."

And when talking about Catholic voters in Belfast he said, "They are

sub-human animals."

Wilson believes climate change is a "myth based on dodgy science" and an "insidious propaganda campaign" as well as "an hysterical pseudo-religion".

When Loyalist paramilitaries proposed ethnic cleansing and repartition to get Catholics out of Northern Ireland by force, Wilson called the plan a "very valuable return to reality".

He said it "shows that some Loyalist paramilitaries are looking ahead and contemplating what needs to be done to maintain our separate Ulster identity".

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

GLOBAL REVOLT SHOWS WE HAVE HAD ENOUGH

THE NUMBER of serious revolts erupting across the globe is growing. Many protests sparked by a specific issue quickly turn into more general challenges to the system.

In Lebanon, huge protests began last week against a plan to make people pay taxes on WhatsApp calls. Within days demonstrators were chanting, "Revolution, revolution."

In Chile, a plan to raise Metro fares saw big demonstrations and the burning down of stations. It follows years of growing inequality. Protester Constanza Gonzalez said, "People are angry and this had been coming for a long time."

In Hong Kong, protests that have grown into a pro-democracy movement are into their 20th week.

Other protests recently erupted in Catalonia, Ecuador, Haiti, Iraq and Egypt. In every one there is a sense that people have reached the limit of what they will put up with.

The revolts come a decade after an economic crash that ushered in savage austerity. Wages have been cut, services slashed,

pensions ransacked and jobs lost.

We are often told that this system is the most efficient and fair way to run society. But the crash hit the legitimacy of capitalism.

Even the system's defenders admitted it had failed. And the austerity they claimed would fix things has failed too.

It hasn't stopped economic crisis—it has just let the rich get richer while we suffer. The obscene inequality between rich and poor has become more obvious to more people. And they don't trust politicians who have repeatedly failed them. Britain hasn't seen anything like the same scale of revolt. But recent

All too often reformist leaders steer movements in directions that stop real change

NO SECOND REFERENDUM

A VERY BIG protest took place in London last weekend calling for a "People's Vote" on leaving the European Union (EU).

Organisers said that at least one million attended.

Nearly all marchers were Remain supporters.

The majority of the establishment and the bosses back Remain because leaving the EU will hurt profits. The People's Vote campaign leaders include nasty neoliberals such as Peter

Mandelson and Alastair Campbell. But others—including some Labour members, trade unionists and workers—back Remain and protested too. Several union leaders hail the EU as a protector of workers' rights.

They see the EU as more progressive than a backward Britain led by racist Boris Johnson.

But the EU is a trading bloc based on facilitating business interests in its member states. Its racist border policies have condemned millions of refugees

to drown in the Mediterranean Sea.

Some ordinary people understandably fear Johnson's preferred alternative—closer working with US president Donald Trump.

But the EU will not stave off attacks on workers, privatisation of services or racism.

And a People's Vote—effectively a second referendum—would divide ordinary people when we need unity against the Tories.

We should oppose it.

Socialist Worker

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ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Johnson faces crisis but he isn't finished

TO USE the Churchillian language Boris Johnson likes to ape, he may have lost a battle last Saturday, but he hasn't lost the war. This is true of both his Brexit deal and his ambition to win a general election.

The deal first. There are two key elements. The first concerns the European Union (EU) demand that Britain's departure doesn't lead to a hard border dividing Ireland.

Theresa May sought to solve this problem by agreeing that the whole of the United Kingdom would remain in the EU customs union till a long-term trade deal was reached.

That kept Britain too closely aligned to the EU for the Brexiteer ultras. Johnson solved this problem by caving into Brussels's original proposal, which was that only Northern Ireland in effect remain in the customs union.

This has been softened by saying that it will also be part of the British "customs territory".

But the fact remains that Northern Ireland will have a different status from the rest of the UK that links them to southern Ireland and the EU.

This was anathema to the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), desperate to put off a united Ireland, which is probably why May rejected it. Johnson instead threw them under the bus, though he tried to sweeten the pill by offering more money for the Six Counties.

The hard Brexiteers in the Tory Party didn't utter a peep. Yet one of their leaders, Jacob Rees-Mogg, a few months ago called the DUP "the guardians of the Union of the United Kingdom".

The reason has mainly to do with the second main change in the deals. The EU's main preoccupation, apart from hoping vainly that Brexit will be reversed, has been to ensure that Britain remains locked into its trade regulation regime.

EU leaders have been increasingly vocal about their opposition to a "Singapore on the Thames" with weaker labour and environmental regulations undercutting their firms.

May's deal kept Britain effectively bound to the EU regulatory regime.

Commitment

The Tory right didn't like this because a "Singapore on the Thames" closely aligned to the US under Donald Trump is exactly what they want. So Johnson after becoming prime minister dropped May's commitment to maintaining a "level playing field" in trade regulations with the EU.

EU negotiators forced him to back down on this. But the version of this commitment that he signed up to is less legally confining than in May's agreement. Hence the promises Johnson made to those Labour MPs gullible enough to consider voting for his deal (11 did) to maintain labour and environmental standards.

Anyone who thinks they can rely on his promises should talk to the DUP.

Johnson lost the vote on Saturday precisely because so many MPs don't trust him. So he has been forced under the so-called Benn Act passed a few weeks ago very grudgingly to request a postponement of a Brexit beyond 31 October.

But the reassurance that a no-deal Brexit now—probably—can't happen could tip the balance in the House of Commons in favour of the deal.

EU leaders will—again, probably—grant some kind of postponement. But the Remainers who demonstrated last Saturday and who fondly dream that the EU will save them from Brexit are kidding themselves.

As the commentator Wolfgang Munchau put it, "Continental European chancelleries see Mr Johnson as the big beast of British politics right now. They will need him as a political ally beyond Brexit."

Whether Johnson really is "the big beast of British politics" depends on the general election that surely must happen soon. His aim is clear—to wrap the ultra-Thatcherite dream of a deregulated Britain in the Union Jack and posture as the people's champion against Parliament.

If Labour responds by campaigning for a second referendum to choose between Johnson's deal and staying in the EU, it will be walking into a deadly trap.

Labour's hopes of victory lie instead in its economic programme that begins to map out an alternative to neoliberalism. This is a very dangerous political moment.



EXTINCTION REBELLION activists held a 'closing ceremony' in Trafalgar Square last week

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Celebrate the rebellion, and build the climate movement

by SARAH BATES

TWO WEEKS of action by Extinction Rebellion (XR) activists has brought the issue of climate change onto the streets and into the headlines.

Rebels brought the fight for climate justice directly to the aviation industry, fossil fuel companies and government departments driving environmental catastrophe.

And the International Rebellion saw XR actions grow globally.

There were impressive occupations in Germany, the US and New Zealand, while many smaller initiatives took place in other countries for the first time.

It was a fantastic fortnight of resistance, where thousands of people came together to organise occupations and debate how to fight for a better world.

Police

The Metropolitan Police response was heavy-handed. The force issued a blanket ban on XR assembling in the capital on the seventh day of rebellion.

Some 1,832 people were arrested in London, with 154 charged so far.

Charges include failing to comply with Section 14 restrictions on protests, criminal damage and obstruction of a highway.

XR actions included a thousands-strong People's Assembly in Trafalgar Square and the monster Grief March involving 30,000 people.

Activist Ben clambered up Big Ben to unfurl a banner and hundreds of rebels tried to shut down City Airport in East London.

Activists glued or locked themselves to buildings, roads, bathtubs, and trains.

The latest wave of action had a different feel to April's International Rebellion.

The first International Rebellion was a runaway



An XR rebel last week

success—with XR emerging from it with a boosted membership, profile and bank balance.

Last Thursday's Canning Town action—where activists climbed onto a Tube train roof and were attacked by passengers—has opened a rift in the organisation.

Questions

Some rebels are dismayed that the action went ahead despite large-scale opposition to it. It throws up questions about how decision-making is conducted within XR.

For instance, is a People's Assembly a decision-making body or a listening exercise?

The role of organisational structures should be clarified, improved, and where possible, made more transparent.

And there needs to be serious discussion around whether specific methods should change in light of different police tactics.

Activists are grappling with how to make sure their movement draws in rebels from every section of society.

XR, alongside the school student strikes, have opened up new possibilities of resisting climate catastrophe.

October's action showed the importance of being a rebel for life.

Strike on 29 November

STUDENTS are preparing for another international strike day for climate justice.

Friday 29 November is set to be the fourth global day of action, following three hugely successful days that involved millions of people.

Coordinating group Fridays for Future said strikes are already planned in 1,539 cities across 138 countries. Figurehead

Greta Thunberg struck alongside students in Edmonton, Canada on Friday last week

"Over 7.5 million people in 180 countries joined the climate strike," said Thunberg. "We told world leaders to take action now. 'They didn't listen. So we go on, every Friday. 'The next global climate strike is 29 November and we need everyone to join.'"



A climate striker on 20 September

Got a story?

Email ideas to reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Don't use XR Tube action to attack climate rebels

SHARP ARGUMENTS emerged after a group of Extinction Rebellion (XR) activists tried to shut down the Jubilee Line and Docklands Light Railway (DLR) on Thursday of last week.

They were met by a violent reaction from some passengers at Canning Town with a protester pulled from the top of a train and badly beaten.

Another was chased and removed from a train.

There are some very bad arguments being used against the stunt. One is that it was disruptive.

But protests are often disruptive—does anyone think that the protests in Hong Kong or Ecuador or Catalonia recently weren't?

Another is that it upset ordinary people. But some people don't like Tube strikes. It wouldn't be justified to beat a trade union member on strike.

And the general context matters. Climate change means collapsing civilisation, societal breakdown, war, poverty, species extinction and catastrophe for humans.

That's more of a threat than an XR protest.

Protesters who were verbally and physically abused while undertaking direct action deserve solidarity and support.

Ruth Jarman glued herself to a DLR train at Shadwell station, and said she was undertaking the action because "we are not being heard".

"We are sorry for disrupting the lives of ordinary people—we are desperate and don't know what else to do," she said.

Julie from XR in York saw the action as "disrupting business as usual and that is what XR is all about".

"We're always going to cause disruption—that's the whole point of the actions," she told Socialist Worker.

Parrot

It's wrong for some of the left to seize on this incident to parrot right wing criticism of XR.

But the action has deeply divided the movement.

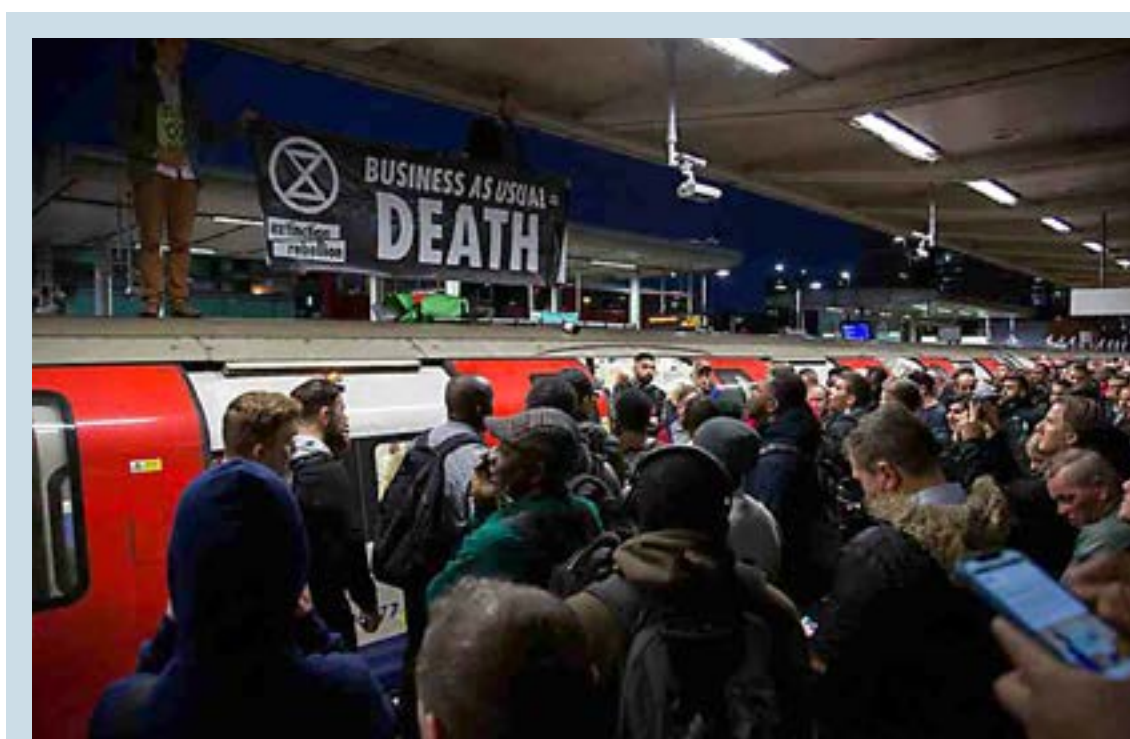
Many rebels have raised concerns about the action via email and a poll on messaging app Telegram.

Some 72 percent of almost 4,000 rebels said they were against the action.

And Wednesday's people's assembly in Trafalgar Square voted against disrupting the Tube.

One London rebel contacted Socialist Worker to talk about the "thoughtless and poorly conceived" action.

"It was so clearly opposed by such an overwhelming majority that it's hard not to suspect that there is some sort of central group of rebels who have developed an



SOME XR protesters disrupted transport last week, leading to some anger from commuters (above). Protests during the two-week International Rebellion have also targeted banks, the aviation industry, the media and government departments (left)

elitist mentality, and who are disregarding other rebels," he said.

"It's a structural problem with XR. It's explained at inductions that actions that don't have support don't happen, because people listen to others.

"It's hard not to see it as bloody-minded when people decide to go ahead anyway."

The Tube action shows the lengths that activists are willing to go to "sound the alarm" about the climate emergency. But XR is at its strongest when it takes mass action.

To win, the movement will need to involve increasing numbers of ordinary people, in particular workers. And it will need to turn its fire at the polluters at the top of society.

Targets matter too—and disrupting the rich and powerful is best.



On other pages...

Whose streets? Our streets!
>>Pages 10&11

Defiance after police ban

THE MET police surprised activists on Monday night last week by implementing what amounted to a London-wide ban for XR protests.

The "Section 14" notice banned "any assembly linked to the Extinction Rebellion 'Autumn Uprising'."

It followed a week of cops seizing equipment, evicting activists and shutting down occupations.

Despite the ban, activists rallied and marched to Trafalgar Square on Tuesday.

And at least 1,000 rebels held a huge people's assembly there the following day.

The repression brought some rebels onto the

streets for the first time.

Beth held a placard reading, "Banning peaceful protests is like banning fire alarms."

"I've not been involved in anything with XR before now," she told Socialist Worker.

"But the ban felt like the start of very bad things, so I felt like I had to be here."

Lucy said she joined the mobilisation in Trafalgar Square because the "outrageous" ban made the demo "the most important one".

"The ban should definitely motivate XR to work even harder, because it makes you realise we're really making an impact," she said.

Demo for 'educational revolution'

ACTIVISTS FROM the "Learning Rebellion" group marched to the Department for Education on Monday.

They demanded an "educational revolution that teaches the reality of climate and ecological breakdown".

The action included education workers, and rebels from XR Families and XR Universities.

It is demanding that education institutions are "supported to make students aware of the crisis and informed about why it is happening and what responses are necessary".

The Learning Rebellion offshoot from XR said, "Students have responded to the crisis, now educators must too."

"We are facing a climate and ecological catastrophe. Young people have contributed the least and will be most affected."

'Saladarity' with animal protesters

THE ANIMAL Rebellion offshoot from XR spent the fortnight staging occupations and dance parties throughout London.

The group received international media attention after Mr Broccoli and Mr Pea were arrested during a protest on Oxford Street last week.

Mr Broccoli was released without charge but Mr Pea faces a court hearing on 15 November.

Animal Rebellion is a direct action group that promotes a plant-based diet as central to tackling the climate emergency.

Groups of activists occupied Smithfield meat market early in the rebellion, and rebels later took action at an abattoir in Farnborough.

Saladarity with Mr Pea's trial—defend the ripe to protest bit.ly/PeaCourt

**Campaign
Against Climate
Change national
meeting
and AGM**

**Saturday 2 November
10am-4.30pm
UCL, Gower St, London
WC1E 6BT**

Organised by the Campaign
Against Climate Change
campaigncc.org



Revolt over cost of living defies troops on the streets of Chile

Protests over a fares hike quickly became a much broader struggle—and stayed on the streets despite a crackdown, reports **Gabby Thorpe**

A WAVE of protest has erupted in Chile, after president Sebastian Pinera's decision to increase metro fares ignited increasing tensions surrounding the cost of living.

Protests began last Thursday when thousands of students took part in a fare dodging protest at metro stations up and down the country.

School and university students jumped over turnstiles in groups, and set fire to dozens of stations.

Protesters erected barricades in seven of the major cities in Chile, including the capital Santiago. They set fire to buses, gas stations, supermarkets and the headquarters of Italian energy company Enel.

The scale and militancy of the protests forced Pinera to withdraw the fare rises.

And he met with government officials claiming to look for ways to “reduce excessive inequalities which exist within our society.”

But just hours after the meeting Pinera said that the demonstrations had a “degree of logistics typical of criminal organisations”—and he then began a crackdown.

Emergency

He declared a state of emergency and put some 10,500 police and soldiers backed by tanks on the streets.

It is the first time since Augusto Pinochet's 1970s dictatorship that there has been a military presence on the streets of Chile.

Police deployed teargas and used water cannons to disperse crowds. They beat protesters and dragged them into custody. Some 1,500 people have been arrested,

FIGURE IT OUT

£618

The average monthly salary in Chile

£48

What some pensioners in Chile receive in a month

£2.16 billion

The personal fortune of president Sebastian Pinera

and at least eight have been killed. Yet despite the crackdown and the phony concessions, demonstrators have stayed on the streets—motivated by dire wages and a high cost of living.

The average wage in Chile is around £618 a month—meaning that people suffer under massive levels of debt in order to survive. Some pensioners get a pension as low as £48 a month.

Meanwhile, Pinera himself is a billionaire, who has privatised much of Chile's education and healthcare services, yet boasts that Chile is an “oasis” in South America.

Protester Enrique Araya said, “Politicians seem to be living in a different world to us. The metro fare was just the detonator.”

Gabriela Munoz said, “You just need to scratch the surface to discover that people are fed up with so much abuse.”

“This is happening because the government won't listen.”

PROTESTERS DISRUPTED public transport in Chile

UNITED STATES

GM auto strikers debate new deal, while Chicago teachers take action

WORKERS AT General Motors (GM) plants and factories across the US began their sixth week of strikes this week, as they voted on a tentative deal.

The new contract put to members of the UAW union would include a pay rise for all workers, and limited opportunities for temporary workers to become permanent.

The deal includes plans for plant closures including in Lordstown, Ohio. The plant will be sold off to electric truck manufacturers the Workhorse Group—a move that will see less than a tenth of Lordstown employees keeping their jobs.

Workers striking in Ohio are not satisfied by the proposed deal—and it could be rejected.

Tommy Woliko was forced to

move to Michigan after working at the Lordstown plant for 11 years. He said, “It's a good experience working there. But it's not home.”

“I'm looking for something that says we're not losing our jobs. It's not there.”

It's not just car workers who are fighting for better conditions. Some 32,000 teachers and members of the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) are on strike over class sizes and availability of support staff.

Last Sunday evening it was announced that teachers had been offered a pay rise of up to 14 percent. But the CTU said that there was still more work to be done before a settlement.

The strike has been slammed by the media. But CTU spokesperson Chris Geovanis told Socialist

Worker, “We've had an inspiring groundswell of support.”

“Parents have visited pickets with their children to show that they back our fight against bosses to make education better for students and teachers.”

The latest teachers' action is inspired by the CTU's strike in 2012. Then, 28,000 teachers walked out over mayor Rahm Emanuel's attempts to smash union organisation and throw out existing contracts.

The 2012 strike ended in victory. There has also been a number of education strikes over the past year.

Teachers and students in West Virginia struck over privatisation last year, inspiring a wave of solidarity strikes in schools across the US.

HONG KONG

Marchers fight cops back

HUNDREDS OF thousands of people protested in Kowloon, Hong Kong, last Sunday.

Marchers were protesting against a recent government ban on the wearing of face masks.

Riot police used tear gas and water cannon against protesters, who responded with Molotov cocktails.

A police water cannon truck doused a mosque in Kowloon with blue dye in an incident cops claimed was “accidental”.

Ordinary people helped clean the mosque.

The movement began in opposition to a law that would have allowed the extradition of suspects to mainland China. Hong Kong's leader Carrie Lam has said the law is withdrawn.

But protesters are now fighting for other demands.

They include more democracy in Hong Kong and an independent investigation into police behaviour.

Be in EU to fight for socialism

SOCIALIST WORKER seems oblivious to the dangers of a no-deal Brexit.

It represents a severe threat to jobs, working class living standards, employment rights, and environmental protections.

A recent TUC union federation document describes it as a “disaster for jobs, public services and the economy”. It stresses that “it’s working people who’ll pay the heaviest price,” including workers in Northern Ireland faced with the return of a hard border.

Moreover, there is no evidence that the majority of working class Leave voters voted for no-deal.

By its one-sided focus on the evils of the European Union (EU), Socialist Worker forgets that it also contains a social chapter which contains directives on health and safety, working conditions, consultation of workers and gender equality.

There is certainly much to criticise in the EU—not least its attitude to migrants—but it is far better to remain and fight from within.

Leaving, including leaving without a deal, means that the British trade union movement is no longer central to the European Trade Union Confederation.

This was set up to advance the interests of working people throughout the EU.

Only from within the EU can the European working classes fight for a socialist Europe.

Sabby Sagal
Central London

Cops ask us to succumb politely to our extinction

THE Extinction Rebellion (XR) demonstrations in London have highlighted the existential threat that the carbon economy poses.

The Metropolitan Police would rather we go to our graves in good order and have ruthlessly policed the protests.

The police have also confiscated the property of the demonstrators including the wheelchairs of disabled activists.

The authorities then tried to take away the right to protest through the use of

repressive and arbitrary Section 14 orders.

However the International Rebellion ends this is not the last of XR. The fight for a future will go on.

As for the police and the despicable Boris Johnson who sanctioned them to use the “full force of the law” against XR, I comfort myself with the thought that should we fail to stop catastrophic climate change, they will burn with the rest of us.

Sasha Simic
East London

Don’t forget about the unemployed

I AM surprised that there is so little discussion among socialists about unemployment.

People talk about low pay and zero hours contracts, but there’s less about people without jobs.

The latest figures showed a rise of 22,000 in the unemployed taking the total to 1.3 million.

A million people unemployed used to be regarded as scandalous.

Even more tellingly, new research last week showed that there are large levels of “hidden” unemployment in towns

Sections of England fans sing racist songs that are taken from the songbook of Northern Ireland’s Unionists.

We know of appalling racist behaviour sometimes by club fans.

For example, in 2015 Chelsea fans pushed a black man off a Paris metro carriage while chanting, “We’re racist, we’re racist, and that’s the way we like it.”

The authorities don’t have clean hands. Last month Huddersfield Town football club was fined £50,000 by the Football Association after their players wore a shirt with a fake sponsors’ logo on it in a pre-season friendly.

Last season, Leeds United were fined £30,000 because a member

of staff watched Derby County training from a public path.

West Ham United’s Robert Snodgrass was fined £25,000 for shouting at a drug-testing official.

But when Millwall was found guilty of racist chanting at their ground? A fine of just £10,000.

England manager Gareth Southgate said after the Bulgaria game, “Sadly, because of their experiences in our own country, they are hardened to racism. I don’t know what that says about our society but that’s the reality.”

We need to fight racism wherever it appears—and those who fuel such behaviour.

Angie Martin
Chester



How many are jobless?

and cities across Britain. This is excluded from the official government statistics.

The study found that more than 3 million people are missing from

the unemployment rate. They report themselves as economically inactive to government labour force surveys, saying that they believe no jobs are available.

The true unemployment rate should therefore rise from 4.6 percent now to 13.2 percent of the working-age population not in education.

And that rate of joblessness and the harsh lives on benefits helps to keep wages low and people in work quiet.

Elana Lewis
Glasgow

Just a thought...

Army role was key in Ecuador

IT IS important to understand another aspect of the retreat from repressive price increases by the Lenin Moreno government of Ecuador (Socialist Worker, 16 October).

It was not only due to the brave resistance of the protesters, but also that the government was losing control of the military.

It is the historical fact that the people must get the army on their side in order to win a revolution. This was the case in Ecuador in recent days

Gloria Bergen
Toronto, Canada

Good riddance to right winger

I WAS delighted to hear that Louise Ellman, Labour MP for Liverpool Riverside, has resigned from the Labour Party.

She claims it is about antisemitism.

But the truth is that she didn’t want to face the questioning and accountability of a reselection process.

John Rigby
Liverpool

XR and the Suffragettes

I WONDER how those who denounced Extinction Rebellion’s (XR) protest on the tube would have reacted to the Suffragettes?

In their battle for votes for women, they smashed windows, carried out arson attacks and disrupted major sporting events.

Were they wrong? It’s quite reasonable to have tactical discussion about XR’s tactics.

It’s not OK to line up with reactionary critics.

Hannah Ellis
West London

Chuka out this hypocrisy

CHUKA Ummuna MP was on the radio on Friday lecturing Labour MPs about how they needed to show loyalty to the principles of their party and vote against the Brexit deal.

What a cheek from the man who ditched Labour to join the independents and then the Lib Dems.

And all without any reference to his constituents.

Bob Peters
East London

ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

As disruption flares up around the globe, **Simon Basketter** looks at how the architecture of cities, institutions and the system is designed to dampen dissent—but how these can face a radical challenge from below

DISRUPTION IS back. From Extinction Rebellion locking down in London to protests holding the streets against riot cops in Chile and Lebanon, controlling the space we can resist in matters.

Blocking a road is always transgressive to the normal running of capitalist society. That transgression is important.

Those at the top want us to be passive observers of politics—but when we resist we put ourselves at the centre.

That's why when the business of business gets disrupted, defenders of the system demand something must be done.

Streets are for traffic and the smooth running of commerce. They are not—as every cop is there to remind you— your streets.

Challenging those restrictions affects those who take part.

Collectively standing up for ourselves and others breaks down the atomised grind of life under capitalism. Protest pushes against the subordination that capitalist society puts upon us.

The revolutionary psychiatrist Wilhelm Reich wrote that the German left was in trouble in the early 1930s when he saw a workers' demonstration obey a “Don't walk on the grass” sign as it entered a park.

One major crisis for the British ruling class in the last 50 years was when people in Northern Ireland rose up against discrimination.

Civil rights marchers saw the state and its allies attempt pogroms to reassert control. Barricades went up in Derry to keep them out.

The police lost control of the city and, by the third day of the Battle of the Bogside, the coercive capacity of the Northern Ireland state was running out. Britain's Labour government responded by sending troops onto the streets.

Resistance

The painting of the slogan “You are now entering Free Derry” on the side of a house is a symbol of resistance to this day.

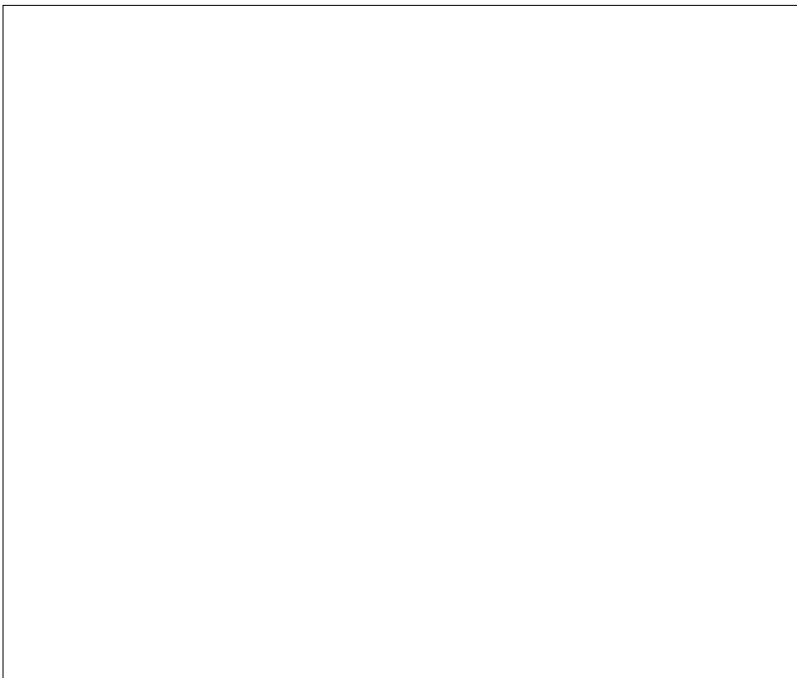
Also to this day Northern Ireland streets are divided on sectarian lines. Every year people put up union jack bunting and paint paving stones red white and blue to show whose street they think it is.

Controlling the streets is central to any vision of changing society. While battles over common spaces have been part of class struggle for hundreds of years, the fight to disrupt or reclaim capitalist space is central to modern resistance.

Sites such as the shopping malls of Hong Kong or Barcelona's airport are the backdrop for struggle today.

The plethora of petty laws and regulations pushed on us to control the spaces we move through are deliberately overwhelming. And the rules are backed by force.

British cops are trained in a fake village in Gravesend on how to



STUDENT SIT-DOWN in Donegal Square East, Belfast, as part of the civil rights campaign (above) Protesters in Hong Kong take on the power of the state (below)

control the streets. In 2016 more than 350 Metropolitan police officers were injured after being attacked by other cops pretending to be demonstrators or rioters.

There are levels of successful resistance. There is a difference between a small group with a drone and thousands defying riot police. The action in Barcelona last week was better than last summer's at Heathrow. Militancy is good. Crowds are good and militant crowds are better still.

It not enough to pass resolutions to bring down the system. Class struggle is far messier and important for that.

We have to disrupt and demonstrate not just to show our opposition, but to build on our potential to change the system.

Any demonstration involves group decision-making. Do we listen to the stewards or ignore them? Sit down or run, chant or change direction? Do we confront the police now or later?

The direction of street movements is harder to control than strikes which have won popular support in a workplace.

Crowds who gather at demonstrations are largely unknown to each other and the dynamic of a protest can change quickly.

So each movement finds different ways to turn the demands of the collective into organised resistance.

Popular street democracy can develop into workers' self-organisation. This often results from people defending themselves against right wing forces or the police.

There were hints of it in the Arab Spring, where uprisings challenged dictators across the Middle East in 2011. People went from defending their streets to trying to sack their bosses.

Protests in Hong Kong or Catalonia or London could do the same. It is not inevitable that a street movement in Spain, the indignados, chose to look to the system and suffered collapse because of it.

Belief that the only way to change the system is from the inside



can encourage people to dismiss—or even promote—marches and blockades purely as stunts or spectacle.

A better conclusion is to deepen confrontation. To win larger numbers of people to adopting the best methods to bring down the system.

That means escalating struggle. It means building mass resistance based on the immense power of the working class.

It means revolution. Then they will be our streets.

British police 'riot training' in specially constructed town centre in Kent (right)



How poor fought for Square

IT WAS hot in 1887. The homeless and poor made use of the warm summer by creating an open-air encampment in Trafalgar Square.

Many had come looking for work at Covent Garden Market but a drought meant fewer boxes of fruit to haul.

With no money for lodgings, they slept rough in the square. The camp grew with unemployed and homeless workers and their families. They would rather turn to the street than face the workhouse and the family separation that came with it. They washed themselves and their clothing in the fountains.

Socialists and the religious came too, handing out leaflets, Bibles, bread and soup. Tents went up and daily speeches were made between the paws of the bronze lions.

The growing encampment brought police—and demands by respectable people to close it down.

Speeches given by socialists such as William Morris and Eleanor Marx led to angry, banner-waving

processions of thousands. These spilled onto the surrounding streets.

The police and the courts tried to stop protesters and clear the square.

But no sooner were people pushed out than they returned.

On 8 November, Sir Charles Warren, the Commissioner of Police, banned all meetings in Trafalgar Square.

A demonstration was planned for 13 November. Its pretext was to demand the release of Irish MP William O'Brien from prison, but the grievances extended far beyond that.

Over forty thousand gathered. They were attacked in what became known as Bloody Sunday—three people were killed and 200 injured.

A week later protesters again marched and one, Alfred Linnell, was killed by a police horse.

The battle for the space went on as tens of thousands attended his funeral.

That the poor of London fought hard means that Trafalgar Square remains a site of assembly and protest.



Protester—Eleanor Marx



Cops' tactics formed in Empire

THE FIRST modern crowd control squad was formed in 1925 in Shanghai, a British colony.

New policing methods, including combat pistol shooting, hand to hand combat skills, and knife fighting, were pioneered by William Fairbairn of the Shanghai Municipal Police.

Fairbairn started as a British soldier and went on to train spooks in how to kill people. He got cops to develop a myriad of riot control measures. He was proudest of his “gutter fighting” techniques—any amount of violence to quell your opponent quickly.

Fairbairn taught cops his methods in the US and the colonial regimes of Cyprus and Singapore.

Current police brutality in Hong Kong also has its roots in the British Empire.

And British cops' violence has links to Hong Kong. In 1981, a year of riots and uprisings in

Britain, British police met Hong Kong top cop Richard Quine in Preston.

Some 14 years earlier, Hong Kong cops brutally suppressed rioters.

In 1967 more than 200 people were killed with some rioters beaten to death by police. British cops were eager to hear how it had been done.

Policing techniques widely used today, including “kettling”, tear gas and short shields by riot squads, were first tested in 1967 in Hong Kong.

After the 1981 meeting the techniques were on full display in British police violence against miners during the 1984-1985 strike, and most infamously in the Battle of Orgreave.

French lessons from history

IN THE musical Les Misérables the barricades of Paris are made of crates and furniture. They weren't.

Victor Hugo, chronicling the 1830 revolution more accurately, wrote, “The barricade was built with setts...Not a stone out of line...”

Setts are oblong roadstones. Compacted crushed stone surfaced the roads, instead of cobblestones, setts or tarred-wooden blocks. This was to reduce the availability of ready-made missiles and fire-starters.

Like the road itself this was part of a plan to stop protests in the centre of Paris.

Throughout the 19th century, Paris had been at the centre of civil unrest that saw the country transition between royalty, republic and empire six times by 1870.

There were 21 instances of barricades being used between 1795 and 1871. The 1830 revolution saw over 4,000 barricades put up across the city. In 1848's February Revolution, there were 6,000.

By the time Napoleon III declared himself emperor in 1852 something had to be done. The man to do it was Georges-Eugene Haussmann.

A self-styled baron, Haussmann made up for his lack of architectural knowledge with enthusiasm for demolishing things.

Haussman was particularly keen to do over working class neighbourhoods with reputations for revolt.

He described them as “a floating mass of workers who are attracted only by impressions and the most deplorable suggestions”.

US writer Mark Twain pointed out the wide straight roads were to protect Napoleon.

Twain wrote, “He is annihilating the crooked streets and building in their stead noble boulevards as straight as an arrow—avenues which a cannonball could traverse from end to end without meeting an obstruction more irresistible than the flesh and bones of men.

“The mobs used to riot there, but they must seek another rallying point in future.”

Happily Twain was wrong and Haussman's urban planning didn't stop an insurrection in 1871 that led to the Paris Commune, a socialist government that briefly ruled Paris.

Setts were dug up in Paris to throw at police in 1968 and again by Yellow Vest protesters this year.

That is a story of the epic failure to develop the streets of Paris to prevent protest.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

KENT

Booklaunch: System change not climate change

Thu 14 Nov, 7.30pm,
Nucleus Arts Centre
(Conference Room),
272 High St,
Chatham, ME4 4BP

LONDON: NEWHAM

Booklaunch: A Rebel's Guide to Alexandra Kollontai

Wed 30 Oct, 7pm,
Stratford Advice Arcade,
107-109 The Grove (next
to Morrisons car park),
E15 1HP

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

Booklaunch: System Change Not Climate Change

Wed 20 Nov, 7.30pm,
William Morris
Community Centre,
6-8 Greenleaf Rd,
Walthamstow, E17 6QQ

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

ABERDEEN

Hong Kong, mass protests and the working class

Mon 28 Oct, 6pm,
The Snug,
Ma Cameron's,
6-8 Little Belmont St,
AB10 1JG

BARNSELEY

Marxism, strikes and trade unions

Thu 31 Oct, 7pm,
Room 302, The Civic,
Hanson St,
S70 2HZ

BIRMINGHAM

Hong Kong, mass protests and the working class

Wed 30 Oct, 7pm,
The Church at Carrs Lane,
Carrs Ln,
B4 7SX

BOLTON

Why do LGBT+ people still face violence?

Wed 30 Oct, 7pm,
Bolton Socialist Club,
16 Wood St (off
Bradshawgate),
BL1 1DY

BRIGHTON & HOVE

Why does capitalism need borders?

Thu 31 Oct, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Ship St,
BN1 1AF

BURNLEY AND PENDLE

The united front — Trotsky's theory and practice

Wed 30 Oct, 7.30pm,
Red Triangle Cafe,
160 St James's St,
BB11 1NR

CARDIFF

Hong Kong, mass protests and the working class

Wed 30 Oct, 7.30pm,
Cathays Community Centre,
Cathays Terrace,
CF24 4HX



ACTIVISTS IN Glasgow show solidarity with Kurds in Syria

PICTURE: ANDREW MCGOWAN

Turkey, the Kurds and imperialism

EDINBURGH

Wed 30 Oct, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
7 Victoria St,
EH1 2JL

HUDDERSFIELD

Wed 30 Oct, 6.30pm,
Brian Jackson House,
2 New North Parade (near
both train and bus stations),
HD1 5JP

NEWCASTLE

Wed 30 Oct, 7pm,
Floor 2, Commercial
Union House,
39 Pilgrim St,
NE1 6QE

WOLVERHAMPTON AND WALSALL

Wed 30 Oct, 7.15pm,
Light House,
Suite 16, Chubb Bldg,
Fryer St, WV1 1HT

CHESTERFIELD

What do socialists say about Cuba?

Thu 31 Oct, 7pm,
Chesterfield Library,
New Beetwell St, S40 1QN

COLCHESTER

Gandhi, non-violence and civil disobedience

Thu 31 Oct, 8pm,
Oyster Room, Hythe
Community Centre,
1 Ventura Drive, CO1 2FG

DUNDEE

The case for a revolutionary party

Wed 30 Oct, 7.30pm,
Dundee Voluntary Action,
10 Constitution Rd,
DD1 1LL

GLASGOW

60 years since the revolution — where is Cuba going?

Thu 31 Oct, 7pm,
Avant Garde, 33-44 King St,
Merchant City, G1 5QT

KENT

Migration and climate change

Thu 31 Oct, 7.30pm,
Nucleus Arts Centre,
272 High St,
Chatham, ME4 4BP

LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE

How can we get from capitalism to socialism?

Thu 31 Oct, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Meeting House Lane, LA1 1TX

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

Corbyn vs the establishment

Thu 31 Oct, 7pm,
The Swarthmore
Education Centre,
2-7 Woodhouse Square,
LS3 1AD

LIVERPOOL

Can the Green New Deal stop climate change?

Thu 31 Oct, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
22 School Ln, L1 3BT

LONDON: HACKNEY

Angela Davis — women, race and class

Thu 31 Oct, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner
Lower Clapton Rd), E5 0PU

LONDON: HARINGEY

Corbyn vs the establishment

Wed 30 Oct, 7.30pm,
St John Vianney Church Hall,
386 West Green Rd (corner
Vincent Rd), N15 3QH

LONDON: ISLINGTON

Will Labour's Green New Deal save the planet?

Thu 31 Oct, 7pm,
Elizabeth House, 2 Hurlock St,
Highbury, N5 1ED

LONDON: SOUTH

Bob Marley — roots, reggae and revolution

Wed 30 Oct, 7pm,
Vida Walsh Centre,
2b Saltoun Rd (near Effra Rd,
facing Windrush Square),
Brixton, SW2 1EP

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

Do we need violence to get social change?

Wed 30 Oct, 7.30pm,
Weavers Community Forum,
10 Shackellewell St,
E2 7EG

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

How do ideas change?

Wed 30 Oct, 7.30pm,
William Morris
Community Centre,
6-8 Greenleaf Rd,
Walthamstow,
E17 6QQ

LONDON: WEST & NORTHWEST

Angela Davis — women, race and class

Thu 31 Oct, 7.30pm,
Woodlane Community Centre,
78 White City Cl,
Shepherd's Bush,
W12 7DZ

MANCHESTER: CENTRAL

Is Marx still relevant?

Wed 30 Oct, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St,
M2 5NS

NORWICH

Martin Luther King — non-violence and civil disobedience

Wed 30 Oct, 7.30pm,
Vauxhall Centre,
Johnson Place,
NR2 2SA

OXFORD

State and revolution — can capitalism be overthrown?

Thu 31 Oct, 7pm,
Restore Building,
Manzil Way,
OX4 1YH

PORTSMOUTH

A Rebel's Guide to Alexandra Kollontai

Wed 30 Oct, 7.30pm,
Somerstown
Community Centre,
River's St,
PO5 4EZ

SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

Hold the line — echoes of the Peckskill riots

Thu 31 Oct, 7pm,
Central United
Reformed Church,
60 Norfolk St (near
Crucible Theatre),
S1 2JB

SWANSEA

Corbyn vs the establishment

Thu 31 Oct, 7.30pm,
Brynmill Community Centre,
St Albans Rd,
SA2 0BP

TELFORD

Migration and climate change

Wed 13 Nov, 7.30pm,
The Roy Fletcher Centre,
17 Cross Hill,
SY1 1JE

{ MOVEMENT EVENTS }

GLASGOW

Marxism in Scotland 2019: Ideas to Change the World

Sat 9 Nov, 10am,
Renfield St Stephens Centre,
260 Bath St,
G2 4JP

bit.ly/MarxismScotland2019

LONDON

Cuba, the Pink Tide and revolution in Latin America

Sat 26 Oct, 2pm,
Room B20,
Birkbeck,
Malet St,
WC1E
bit.ly/PinkTide

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Jesse Pinkman makes his welcome return in El Camino

This film follow-up to *Breaking Bad* brings back one of its best characters—along with much of what made the series so good, writes **Sadie Robinson**

BREAKING BAD fans can get another fix of their favourite series with a new Netflix film, *El Camino*.

The show followed science teacher Walter White and one of his ex-students, Jesse Pinkman, as they produced crystal meth drugs to pay for White's cancer treatment.

Their business led to chaos and horror—especially for Jesse, played by Aaron Paul. The final episode of the series brought some closure on Walt's story. *El Camino* focuses on Jesse.

It picks up where the series ended. Jesse is in a mess—dirty, dishevelled and traumatised. But a number of characters show him real affection.

Junkyard owner Old Joe will crush Jesse's car for him for free because he's a "good kid". His friend skinny Pete will do anything to help Jesse because, "Dude, you're my hero and shit."

I liked revisiting the cinematography—the lighting, the familiar backdrop of rundown stores, highways and acres of breath-taking wilderness.

And as usual, Jesse's friends offer light relief and some comedy.

A strength of *Breaking Bad* is that it refused to create characters that are wholly "good" or "bad". *El Camino* continues this with Jesse. But he is also a victim of much more ruthless people.

Flashbacks show Jesse in captivity, living in a cage. One captor, Todd, makes banal small talk and seems concerned about him—while keeping him trapped. It is terrifying to watch.

Bittersweet

Another bittersweet flashback shows Jesse and Walt in a diner earlier in their drug dealing career. Walt suggests Jesse could go to college. We know these happy dreams will go nowhere, at least not for a while.

Meanwhile Walt thinks Jesse is "really lucky" because he didn't wait his whole life "to do something special". The idea that someone could see such a damaged person as "really lucky" is staggering.

It might seem that the *Breaking Bad* franchise is being squeezed for all it's worth. There has already been a spin-off series, *Better Call Saul*.

Some have questioned the need for a film. But while *El Camino* doesn't include any dramatic twists, it's enjoyable enough to see more of where Jesse went next.

The film isn't conclusive about his future, and that's good. A straightforward, happy ending would have grated.

You do get a sense that Jesse might "start fresh". But as he was told in the opening scenes, he will never be able to "put things right". Whether that will be enough is left unclear.

El Camino is available now on Netflix



'THE WINTER of Discontent, Hatching from the Secretary Glands of Children Not Yet Born'

Nonsense scenes of liberal contempt

BOOK

A PRAT'S PROGRESS

Christopher Spencer
Published by Thames&Hudson, £12.95

THESE PHOTO collages by Twitter user Cold War Steve are said to hide meaning in their absurdity.

In a way, that's true. What on the surface look like send-ups of right wing politicians turn out

to be full of liberal prejudice. Boris Johnson, Theresa May and Nigel Farage rub shoulders with Jeremy Corbyn in what the publishers call "Brexit-era landscapes."

Scenes that apparently typify the drudgery and misery of life for working class Brexit voters are used for ridicule.

Here they are in a pub or outside Gregg's. There they are

on a bus or an estate. Look at them wallow in this backwards mess, it says.

Add to that the casual sexist insults and you have something that, if it came from the left, would be scorned by reviewers from, say, the *Guardian* or the *New Statesman*.

But this is satire for the liberal centre, and they think it's genius.
Nick Clark

Chance to watch a banned South Korean film

FILM

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE STRIKE

Showing at the London Korean Film Festival, 3 Nov. Tickets from £11
Go to bit.ly/before-strike

CHANG YOUNHYUN'S *The Night Before the Strike* depicts the struggles of factory workers against their employers.

The film was banned in South Korea on its release in 1990.

But it found immense popularity through unofficial

screenings, becoming one of the most-viewed independent Korean films of the time.

Fighting against low pay and hostile treatment, the main characters—the core workers at the forge welding department—attempt to form a trade union.

A conflict arises, triggered by those who are afraid of potential consequences.

And to break their spirit managers recruit a spy to blacklist and intimidate the would-be union members.



Struggle at the forge

EXHIBITION

WHEN THE SNOW MELTS

New Art Exchange, Nottingham
Until 31 December. Free entry

NEARLY FOUR million Indians were volunteers in the British Army during the two World Wars. Yet they are often ignored or forgotten in Britain.

This exhibition charts the stories of Nottingham's Muslim communities involved in the Second World War. It also describes revolts against the British Empire in India during the same time period.

It draws from the personal histories of Muslim families from Nottingham. And it uses archive material to pose questions about the process of remembrance and empire.

PHOTOGRAPHY

AUGUST SANDER

National Museum Wales, Cardiff
26 Oct–1 Mar 2020. Free entry

DISCOVER AUGUST Sander's monumental project, *People of the Twentieth Century*, for the very first time in Wales.

The exhibition presents over eighty photographs by August Sander drawn from his profound and ambitious



Secretary at West German Radio

project, *People of the Twentieth Century*.

Sander sought an honest portrayal of German society by photographing people of all ages and backgrounds—from farmers, policemen and politicians to bricklayers, secretaries and artists.

The result is an ambitious body of work that captures, above all, the humanity of his subjects. The exhibition is drawn from a major collection of over 170 modern prints, produced from the original plates.

THEATRE

THE STREET WHERE THE STORIES LIVE

Make. North Docks, Liverpool
1 Nov–2 Nov. £2.50

THE STREET Where the Stories Live is a show about the places we call ours, what they mean to us, and what happens when we have to leave them.

It's about migration, hostile environments and seeking sanctuary among shaky foundations.

THE latest chapter in the tragic history of the Kurds is being written. It's a history that all too often has seen struggles for liberation come to rely on shaky deals with competing imperial powers that always end in treachery.

In the latest betrayal, the fate of millions of people now depends on whatever suits Donald Trump's US, and Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Turkey.

More than 160,000 people have been displaced after Trump allowed the Turkish army—the second largest in the Nato military alliance—into north east Syria. Many face death, trapped in a war zone, if the Turkish invasion continues.

That invasion could also destroy what for many Kurds is a landmark in a struggle for liberation that's more than a century old.

The enclave in north east Syria known as Rojava—carved out amid the Syrian civil war—is their latest hope for a state of their own.

There are more than 30 million Kurds in the world, but there is no Kurdish state. Instead the region of Kurdistan spans parts of Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran.

Kurds in these areas have been horribly oppressed, particularly in Turkey and Syria where their existence, history, and culture have often been outlawed or denied.

In Turkey—though Kurds make up to 20 percent of the population—it was forbidden to speak, read or write Kurdish until recently.

The Turkish state—founded in 1923 on the basis of a single, shared Turkish nation—tried to rub out Kurdish as a separate identity.

Kurds in eastern Turkey were told they were instead “mountain Turks.”

Uprisings

Kurdish uprisings over the decades have been suppressed with great violence, and Kurdish areas kept impoverished.

Following a military take-over in Turkey in 1980, the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) became the centre of a serious movement of resistance to state terror.

Turkey launched what was effectively a war on the Kurdish people within its own borders.

The Turkish military destroyed some 4,000 Kurdish villages and killed some 40,000 people in the 1990s and 2000s—all with the connivance of Turkey's allies the US and Britain.

PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan was captured in 1999—likely with the help of the US. He has been held as the sole prisoner on the Turkish island Imrali ever since.

Kurds in Syria have faced

similar repression. Though the dictatorships of Hafez and Bashar al-Assad harboured Ocalan and the PKK in order to weaken Turkey, they've also tried to wipe out the Kurdish identity.

Hundreds of thousands of Kurdish people lost or were denied Syrian citizenship—and many of the basic rights that go with it.

So when the Syrian Revolution erupted in 2011, many Kurdish people in north



The Kurds are looking to Assad because the United States deserted them

east Syrian towns were part of it and demonstrated.

Kurdish groups also fought the regime, and in 2012 Bashar al-Assad retreated from northern Syria, letting the Kurds take over and establish Rojava.

Yet in the chaotic civil war unleashed by Assad's counter-revolution, the Kurds also had to fight Isis as it tried to take over northern Syria.

They accepted and relied on support from the US to do this. Left wing organisations the

PKK—listed as a banned terrorist organisation in the US—and its Syrian offshoot the YPG ended up fighting in support of the US's intervention in Syria.

Kurdish fighters also forced Arabs out of many of the towns and cities captured from Isis.

The existence of Rojava ended up depending on the backing of US imperialism, as well as the agreement of the Syrian regime.

Now that the US has decided to ditch the Kurds to please Turkey, they're looking to the regime of the counter-revolution—Assad—to prop them up.

It's a tragedy, but it didn't happen without warning.

IN IRAQ imperial powers have repeatedly backed Kurdish struggles for independence—only to ditch them whenever it suited. And that's something that's been going on since at least 1920.

Then, the Kurds were promised a state by powerful empires victorious after the First World War, only to be cruelly—and brutally—denied it.

Britain, the US and France had promised the Kurds their own state in a treaty signed in 1920.

But in the great carve up of the Middle East that followed the First World War, no imperial power was willing to give up the land.

Britain backed the plan to set up a Kurdish state in Anatolia, eastern Turkey, as it was fighting the Turkish nationalists there.

But when the two sides reached an agreement, the plan for a Kurdish state was dropped.

And in northern Iraq, which Britain had seized and discovered oil in, it crushed Kurdish attempts at independence with bombs and chemical weapons.

Kurdish nationalist sheikh Mahmud Barzanji—who led the Kurds in northern Iraq—had a conflicting relationship with the British.

Britain twice appointed him as governor in northern Iraq, using him to try and contain his movement and keep control of the region.

But fundamentally they were opposed to each other.

Barzanji wanted an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq, and Britain would never allow one.

Both of his reigns as governor ended in revolts aimed at winning independence. And both times Britain defeated, captured and then exiled him.

After that the Kurdish movement in Iraq was repeatedly picked up and dropped by imperial forces depending on whether they supported or opposed whoever was in charge.

For instance the US supported a coup in Iraq in 1968 that brought to power the Ba'athist party which put down the Kurdish movement. Yet in the 1970s it supported the Kurds against the Ba'athist regime to help Iran, which was

then its regional ally.

The US agreed to arm and fund the Kurds until Iran no longer needed them. Then they were ditched.

US secretary of state Henry Kissinger summed up the approach. “Promise Kurds anything, give them what they get, and fuck them if they can't take a joke.”

As Iraq's dictator Saddam Hussein became an ally of the West, the US ignored his atrocities against the Kurds.

It happened again in 1991. The US encouraged Kurdish rebellions in support of its invasion of Iraq—only to abandon them to be massacred.

The Kurds were eventually allowed their own autonomous region in northern Iraq in return for supporting the US's invasion in 2003.

But this semi-state is oppressive and dictatorial—jailing its critics and dissidents. And it's entirely dependent on its relationship and support for the aims of US imperialism.

In 2014, having helped the US to defeat Isis in Iraq, Kurdish president Masoud Barzani called an independence referendum.

The referendum returned a 93 percent vote for independence.

IN RESPONSE the Iraqi government, backed by the US, sent troops to push the Kurdish fighters back into their enclave.

The entire history of the Kurds should be a warning that true liberation can't come on the basis of support for imperialism.

Whether or not the Kurds are allowed independence—and what that independence would look like—would depend entirely on the needs of US imperialism.

Proper liberation for Kurdish people can only be won by challenging imperialism in the region, not by cooperating with it. It needs a movement and mass

US and Turkish troops on a joint mission last month (top) Signing the Treaty of Laussane in 1923 to carve up the Middle East (above)

uprisings that unites ordinary workers across sectarian divides, and in which every ethnic group has a say in its own destiny.

The prospect of such a movement was raised by revolutions across the Middle East in 2010 and 2011.

In many ways, the defeat of those revolutions is responsible for the sectarian and ethnic divisions in Syria today.

But right now it means standing in solidarity with the Kurds as they face another massacre at the hands of a US ally.



COMMENT

What actually makes a person middle class?

Tomáš Tengely-Evans

argues that being middle class isn't about your lifestyle, accent, or whether you do a manual job

WHEN PEOPLE want to discredit a protest movement, they sometimes describe it as “middle class”.

Quite often they mean anyone in white collar professions, university graduates, and those who make supposedly “middle class” consumer choices, such as being vegan.

This isn't a very useful way of defining the middle class. It's much better to understand class as a social relationship.

The revolutionary Karl Marx argued that capitalist society is divided between two main classes—capitalists and workers.

A minority of capitalists own or control the “means of production”. That could be a factory and the machinery, the planes, trains or buses, or a call centre and the phones.

And because working class people—the majority in society—don't own or control this stuff, they're forced to sell their ability to work for a wage.

There are also groups that sit between capitalists and workers.

When Marx was writing in the 19th century, he referred to them as the “petty bourgeoisie”—small capitalists.

Shopkeepers

They include shopkeepers, professionals who run their own businesses such as GPs, dentists or lawyers, and owners of smaller companies.

But changes in capitalism mean other groups, who aren't “small capitalists”, are part of it too.

Managers are one of the biggest components of the middle class.

As firms grew into huge corporations, capitalists came to rely on a bureaucracy of managers to discipline the workforce.

At the very top of the

scale, it's hard to distinguish between capitalists and managers who enjoy similar privileges. At the other end, line-managers often don't get paid much more than workers and have others breathing down their necks.

The same is true within the public sector.

In a school the head teacher and a handful of people in the senior leadership team are managers.

The bulk of ordinary teachers and support staff are workers under managerial discipline.

In addition to managers, a small section of white collar professionals are middle class.

For instance, professors rely on salaries, but still have a large amount of autonomy from managerial control—although autonomy in some professions has been eroded in recent years.

Because middle class people sit in between capitalists and workers, they can identify with both classes.

Your line manager might behave like a mini-dictator, but also complain about the company's latest

cost-cutting restructure. And heads bear down on teachers, but sometimes speak out or join union protests over budget cuts.

Outside of the workplace, middle class people can be pulled to both the right and left.

Often they identify with “centrist” politics, favouring stability and the status quo that they've done well under.

When the system isn't delivering, the middle class can feel squeezed and sections can look to right wingers who scapegoat minorities for problems.

Donald Trump's core support and large numbers at Brexit Party rallies are made up of petty bourgeois types.

Forces

But the middle class's response is shaped by the class forces around it—and it can be drawn behind a militant working class fighting for social change.

A movement like Extinction Rebellion, for instance, includes middle class and working class people horrified at the prospect of climate change.

To dismiss it as middle class—which even some on the left do—misunderstands what class is and the movement's significance.

It's a no-brainer that socialists should be part of a movement fighting for system change.

And we should seek to link it with the organised working class, which has the collective power to shut down the system burning the planet.



Middle class people can be pulled either to the right or to the left



TURKISH TROOPS confront Kurdish refugees in 1991

KURDS—A HISTORY OF AGONY

As the Kurds once again find themselves under attack and under pressure from imperial powers Nick Clark looks at a history of oppression, betrayal and resistance

A Kurdish sniper overlooking the city of Kobani

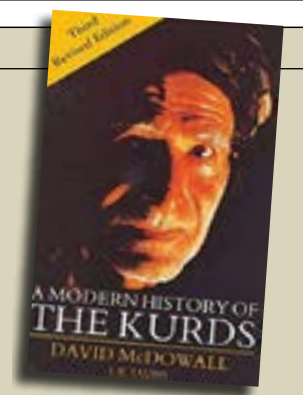
READ MORE

● **A modern history of the Kurds** by David McDowell £19.99

● **Dances with wolves: Turkey and the Kurds** by Ron Margulies bit.ly/kurdshistory

● **Syria—Revolution, counter-revolution and war** by Anne Alexander and Jad Bouharoun £3

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Mass protests and strikes for democracy sweep towns and cities across Catalonia

by ANDREW NICOLL in Catalonia

MASS STRIKES and huge street demonstrations have swept Catalonia in response to brutal sentences imposed by the Spanish supreme court on leading pro-independence figures.

These sentences included 13 years in jail for Oriol Junqueras, the Catalan deputy president, and nine to 12 years for others.

A general strike brought much of Catalonia to a standstill last Friday.

Swathes

Although it was called by two minority trade union federations, large swathes of Catalan workers answered the call.

There were also mass demonstrations in the major cities.

In Barcelona, over 500,000 people took part in the demonstration. Feeder marches travelled miles on foot from provincial Catalan towns. They blocked 20 roads before

PROTESTERS MARCH into Barcelona

pouring into the capital. Sizeable contingents of organised workers joined the demonstration.

They included Barcelona dockers and firefighters—workers who played a significant role during the independence referendum in 2017. In

Girona, which has a population of 100,000, an estimated 45,000 people marched.

The general strike and demonstrations concluded a week of mass protests. Students struck and occupied buildings in universities throughout Catalonia.

Following the example of the pro-democracy demonstrators in Hong Kong, demonstrators occupied the El Prat airport in Barcelona, resulting in thousands of cancelled flights.

Many protests were met with vicious attacks from

the police—both the Spanish national and the regional Catalan force.

A young protester lost an eye during the airport action when the police fired rubber bullets. The police also went on the rampage on the streets of Barcelona, lashing out at protesters including people involved in sit-down actions.

Right wing politicians such as Albert Rivera of Ciudadanos and leaders of the Popular Party (PP) have claimed that protesters caused violence.

Rule

They have called on the PSOE Labour-type government to reintroduce direct rule in Catalonia.

The interior minister of the Catalan government, Miquel Buch, has defended the police actions.

Pablo Iglesias of the Podemos movement has expressed solidarity with the prisoners. But he insisted, “Everyone will have to respect the law and accept

the sentence.” From his calls to “assault the heavens” when he launched Podemos in 2014, not even a distant memory remains.

The far right party Vox has tried to mobilise against the movement and Nazi thugs have launched several attacks on protesters. The police have done little to stop them and instead focused on attacking the protesters.

But Catalonia has not stood alone. Encouragingly, there have also been mobilisations outside of Catalonia, most notably in the Basque Country, but significantly in Madrid, Valencia, Granada and Seville.

The recent mobilisations have reignited enthusiasm for the struggle after a long lull and involved layers far beyond the traditional independence movement.

More online

For a longer version of this article go to bit.ly/Catalonia1

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Wave of sixth form strikes gets top marks

Action at 23 colleges is about more than anger at employers' paltry pay offer, reports **Sadie Robinson**

A STRIKE by sixth form college workers last week showed the potential to build bigger resistance to the Tories.

Walkouts over cuts to pay and funding took place in 23 colleges across England.

And activists say the strike has recruited more workers to the union. Nick Luft, a union rep at Sir George Monoux College in east London, said people signed up "literally in the last few days" before the strike.

At St John Rigby Sixth Form College in Wigan, the NEU has increased its membership by 19.

Around 40 joined an upbeat picket line at Solihull's Sixth Form College in Birmingham, and up to 30 joined at Islington Sixth Form College in north London.

Duncan Blackie, a rep at Longley Park Sixth Form College in Sheffield, said, "We had the biggest picket line we've ever had."

And Rob Behan, a rep at east London's Newham Sixth Form College, said a lot of strikers "came out for the first time".

Outcomes

Workers were largely motivated by the impact of cuts on working class students.

Roschelle was picketing at St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College in Wandsworth, south London.

She said that since moving there from a school sixth form, the size of her A-Level class "has gone from ten to 24".

"They want the same outcomes for students, but they aren't given the same starting blocks," she said. "And people who are disadvantaged get the worst start."

Striker Luisa added, "Everyone's angry about the gender pay gap in big firms. But there's a class pay gap where people who work in poorer areas get less pay and less resources."

Others said that cuts put vulnerable students at risk.

St Francis Xavier union rep Rachel said, "Because of austerity, more students have mental health issues such as anxiety."

BACK STORY

● Sixth form colleges have suffered real terms funding cuts of over a quarter since 2010

● The government has slashed £1.1 billion from 16-19 education

● It has recently promised just £400 million in extra funding

● Cuts lead to bigger class sizes, fewer support services and closed courses

● Sixth form college workers have also been offered lower pay rises than school teachers

"But there have been cuts to support services. I recently referred someone who urgently needs help but who isn't going to be seen until January.

"People will fall through the net."

Luisa said that education isn't always accessible to some poorer students, because a lot of learning programmes are online.

Yet there have been cuts to the library service, and some students can't access the internet at home.

She added, "We've had quite a lot of classes shut down."

South London striker Louisa said, "We're asked to promote enrichment—such as after-school clubs—but there's no time."

"I teach Maths GCSE and all my classes are above the size limit we are supposed to have."

Pickets described big turnovers of staff because people know they can earn more elsewhere—causing disruption for students.

Jean Evanson is the post-16 rep on the NEU's national executive committee and a union rep at Shrewsbury College Group.

She told a packed central London rally, "We can't legally strike for students. But we are standing up for our students too."



COLLEGE WORKERS on the picket line in Bristol

'I teach more lessons now, but time to deliver each course has shrunk'

CUTS TO sixth form colleges are trashing workers' lives. The Tories have slashed some £1.1 billion from 16-19 education funding since 2010.

Workers' pay is down by 16 percent—and they have been offered a lower pay rise than school teachers.

"It's just unfair," St Francis Xavier striker Selena told Socialist Worker. "We're doing the same work."

Like many, she felt unappreciated. "We all stay behind after school doing marking, admin and contacting parents if students aren't attending," she said.

"I want to settle here but it's hard. I can't afford to buy a place."

"I worked abroad before and had two holidays a year. Now I've had no holidays and I don't go out as much."

Tracey from Shrewsbury Sixth Form College said the impact of cuts has been "massive". "We have no

work-life balance," she told Socialist Worker. "The stress is affecting us all."

Jo from Brighton, Hove and Sussex Sixth Form College said, "I'm on an 80 percent part time contract but still work 60 hours a week."

"It's a hard decision to strike but ultimately I'm doing it for my students."

Hours

Fleur from Brighton's Varndean College added, "The majority of staff are part time but do full time hours."

"When staff retire, their work is divided up among the others."

She said she has watched conditions get worse since starting work in the sector 20 years ago.

"Class sizes have grown," she said. "The number of lessons I have to do every week has grown. And the amount of time I have to deliver each course has shrunk."

The union has named two further strike dates—5 and 20 November. Pickets said this made workers confident that the union is serious.

City and Islington Sixth Form union rep Pippa Dowswell told

Socialist Worker, "No one went into work. Everyone was optimistic and determined."

Strikers packed into a rally in central London on the strike day, before marching on the Department for Education.

Ahead of the action, workers were offered an increase on their previous 1 percent pay offer—to 1.5 percent.

Joint general secretary of the NEU Kevin Courtney told strikers, "We have done nothing like enough, but we have started to move them. We believe there's more money."

As striker Rachel said, "Boris Johnson has recently promised all sorts of bribes. They find money when they want to."

More colleges could join future walkouts as the NEU reballots 16 others that just missed the 50 percent turnout threshold for legal strikes.

Courtney told the rally that the fight would "not go away" if a general election is called.

Andy, district secretary of Wandsworth NEU, told Socialist Worker, "When you go into battle if you don't get anywhere, you need to escalate."



Strikers Rachel and Luisa

IN BRIEF

Overground action vote over closures

WORKERS ON the London Overground are set to ballot for action over plans to axe 65 percent of ticket office hours across the capital.

RMT union members are preparing for action over the Transport for London cuts, which threaten jobs and passenger safety.

Some stations are facing cuts of over 80 percent. Ticket offices at three stations are due for closure.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash called on London mayor Sadiq Khan to take action.

A breakthrough in Merseyrail battle

THE RMT union has declared a “major breakthrough” in the long-running dispute over the future of Merseyrail guards.

Workers were preparing to take action over the implementation of driver only operated trains.

It would be a move that threatens workers’ jobs and passenger safety.

All action is suspended on the line after the firm has made a guarantee that a guard will be on the train at all times. Merseyrail has also given assurances that the job role would be sufficiently safety-trained.

Workers should be ready for action in case Merseyrail bosses renege on their promises—as they did before.

Three strikes planned by UVW members

MEMBERS OF the United Voices of the World union (UVW) are set to strike in three workplaces this week.

All are battles over pay, union rights and conditions.

Caterers at the University of Greenwich plan to strike on 24, 28 and 31 October.

Royal Parks cleaners are set to strike on 24 and 31 October.

And up to 200 cleaners, caterers and porters outsourced to Sodexo at St Mary’s hospital in Paddington, west London are set to strike on 28, 29 and 31 October.

Join ‘Stop the hate, educate’ protest

A PROTEST has been organised to defend LGBT+ equality education.

Called by Stand Up to LGBTQ+ Hate Crime it is advertised as a celebration of love, inclusion and diversity!

Participants will be invited to talk about their own experiences of LGBT+ perspectives at school.

The group said, “Please dress up and bring placards, musical instruments, banners, flags, umbrellas.

“No to homophobia, no to Islamophobia, no to transphobia.”

●Demonstrate Sat 2 Nov, assemble 1pm, Downing Street

RETAIL



ASDA WORKERS protesting in Leeds last week (see right)

PICTURE: NEIL TERRY

LIBRARIES

Bradford library workers bring the bosses to book

LIBRARY AND museum workers in West Yorkshire staged the first of 14 walkouts against funding cuts this week.

Unite union members at Bradford’s 14 libraries and museums began a 48-hour strike on Monday.

They are fighting against the Labour-run council’s plans to push through £2 million of cuts over the next two years.

It has implemented plans to slash £950,000 from April 2019 and a further £1,050,000 from April 2020.

On Monday morning workers rallied in Bradford city centre then picketed outside Shipley library. One worker told the rally, “Management have repeatedly and consistently refused to listen to the concerns of staff.

“The staff who run the services have told them time and again that their proposals are unworkable.”

Big cheers greeted an announcement that the majority of libraries were shut because of the strike.



On the picket line at Shipley library

PICTURE: NEIL TERRY

Mark Fieldhouse, a Unite regional organiser, said, “We’ve managed to ensure that we’ve got a good number of our members out.

“The majority of the libraries have closed as a result of the industrial action.”

They plan a further three-day walkout from 5 November, a five-day stoppage from 18 November and five days of

strikes from 2 December.

Meanwhile, library workers in south east London began their 20th week of an indefinite strike on Monday.

Unite union members in Bromley are fighting against planned job cuts by subcontractor Greenwich Leisure Limited.

●Tweet support to Bradford strikers at @UniteNEYH

Sacked for Xmas at Asda?

ASDA supermarket workers facing the imposition of harsh new contracts handed in a petition with 23,000 signatures to bosses in Leeds last week.

Asda workers have been told to sign the contracts—which will see them lose all their paid breaks and forced to work bank holidays—or be sacked on 2 November.

Gary Carter, GMB union national officer, said, “If Asda is serious about not wanting to sack thousands its employees in the run-up to Christmas, it needs to withdraw the dismissal notices and sit down with GMB to resolve this dispute. “Asda has served notice

on up to 12,000 of its employees—that cannot be right.”

Latest company accounts show the directors trussed a whopping £12 million last year, and profits rocketed more than £92 million.

But at the same time Asda slashed 5,000 jobs.

One Asda worker told the GMB, “I’ve never felt so worthless. I feel used and abused.

“I’m losing eight holiday days.

“I’ve been at Asda for 22 years and it’s like they just don’t care.”

●Sign the petition supporting the Asda workers’ fight at bit.ly/AsdaPetition

CLEANERS AND CATERERS



Outsourced workers protesting in April

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Success for UCL fightback

CLEANERS, security workers and caterers at University College London (UCL) have scored a victory.

The university has agreed to Unison union demands that workers outsourced to Sodexo will have their pay and benefits improved.

They will be brought up to the level of similar directly-employed workers.

The announcement follows a protest on 18 October which demanded that outsourced workers receive equal pay and pension contributions to those who are employed by the university.

In addition UCL workers who are members of the

Independent Workers of Great Britain union (IWGB) have been balloting for strikes.

The IWGB is holding a protest on Tuesday of next week to demand an end to bullying and discrimination faced by cleaners at the university.

The IWGB is also demanding occupational sick pay for the cleaners.

Both of the unions say the battle continues to bring the workers back in-house and completely end the scourge of outsourcing.

●Protest—UCL end outsourcing, Tue 29 Oct, 3.30pm-5pm, Malet Place, London. Hosted by IWGB

OBITUARY

Drew McEwan 1947-2019

COMRADES IN Glasgow were saddened to hear of the death of Drew McEwan, who passed away after a courageous battle with asbestos-linked mesothelioma.

He joined the International Socialists (the forerunner of the SWP) in 1969 and was an active member of the party until he became ill last October.

He was exceptionally well read and always made thoughtful and insightful

contributions at branch meetings.

Drew was a rank and file trade union activist who was acutely conscious of the importance of solidarity action.

He was on the picket lines during the BSR dispute in East Kilbride in 1969.

Drew was part of the SWP factory branch at the giant Chrysler car factory in Linwood where around 150 copies of Socialist Worker were sold every week. As part of the Chrysler delegation, he took part in the mass solidarity protest at Grunwicks



Drew McEwan

in 1977 with such enthusiasm that he was arrested twice.

He played a crucial role during the bitter Timex dispute in Dundee in 1993, helping to organise mass pickets and coordinate the solidarity

protests at the factory.

Drew was charged with a range of offences. A superb defence campaign was organised by trade unionists and socialists which was a factor in his acquittal.

Drew found it difficult to get employment after the Timex dispute and retrained as a teacher of English as a foreign language.

He was in Palestine during the second Intifada in 2002.

Drew came into contact with asbestos when he worked in Fairfield’s shipyard in Glasgow in the early 1970s.

The argument within unions at the time was that workers should be paid more for working with asbestos.

Drew was part of a smaller group on the left who argued that asbestos should be banned.

The system that Drew fought so hard to change caused his death by forcing workers to work with asbestos.

Drew’s commitment to socialist internationalism was an inspiration to us all. Our thoughts are with his family at this difficult time.

Charlie McKinnon and Helen Blair, Glasgow SWP

HEALTH

NHS support staff stage defiant action

by TOMÁŠ TENGY-EVANS

HUNDREDS OF health workers across the north west of England are holding firm against bosses' plans to impose a new pay deal.

Striking support staff at Blackpool Victoria Hospital and St Helens and Knowsley Hospital received letters from bosses.

These indicated that they would impose a new pay deal last week.

Cleaners and caterers all threw letters into a bin on the picket line, saying, "It's a no from me."

The Unison union members struck three days last week and on Sunday and Tuesday of this week.

They were set to walk out this Thursday to demand subcontractor Compass gives them the same rates of pay as workers directly employed by the NHS.

They chanted, "Low pay, no way—same job, same pay."

Banner

At Whiston hospital workers hung a banner reading, "No moral compass" from the roof of a multi-storey car park.

Their dispute comes after workers won NHS rates of pay at the Liverpool Women's Hospital and Bolton Royal Infirmary in the last year.

A combination of calling hard-hitting industrial action and solidarity forced bosses to cough up.

Every trade unionist should build solidarity for



COMPASS WORKERS are showing the way

PICTURE: UNISON NORTH WEST/FACEBOOK

the fight to make sure the Compass workers join the list of victories.

■ **PHARMACY WORKERS** in Scotland said there is "light at the end of the tunnel" as they began the 10th week of an all-out strike on Monday.

Unite union members at Tayside NHS have been

promised job evaluation panel hearings by the Scottish Terms and Conditions Committee (Stac) on Thursday of this week.

They are fighting against a "flawed job evaluation" that left "some workers on lower grades than they should be".

Stac, a joint bosses'

and unions' body, is then scheduled to hold "consistency checking" on Tuesday of next week.

A statement from Unite said it hopes "the overwhelming evidence presented to Stac will ensure our members get the outcome they rightfully deserve".

UNIVERSITIES

UCU activists fight to get the vote out in two ballots

UCU UNION activists are making a final push this week to get the vote out in two strike ballots.

Around 125,000 union members in 147 universities are balloting for action over pay, workloads, casualisation and equality.

And at 69 of these, more than 52,000 workers are also balloting for strikes to defend their USS pension scheme.

The ballots end on Wednesday of next week, and the union is set to meet two days later to consider its next moves. There could be

national walkouts, possibly alongside CWU union members, later in the year.

Some activists have also organised a one-day conference to be held on the Saturday after the results are announced.

Called by London Region UCU and backed by the UCU Left group among others, it will discuss how to beat casualisation, recruiting new activists and much more.

● UCU in transformation—one year on. Saturday 2 November, 11am-5pm, University College London, Gower Street, WC1E 6BT

MANUFACTURING



Fighting for decent pay

PICTURE: UNITE EAST MIDLANDS/FACEBOOK

Forbo floor strikers aren't fobbed off by greedy bosses

SOME 75 Unite union members at Forbo Flooring in Ripley, Derbyshire, have begun a ten-week campaign to win a pay rise and to stop bullying and harassment by management.

They want a 3 percent rise but management's best offer so far is 2.2 percent.

The plan is to strike on Tuesdays and Wednesdays as this has maximum impact on production.

Some strikers believe that bosses are holding firm because they fear the mood of militancy will spread to other plants.

There were two shifts of

picket lines last week and support from the local TUC and Unite Community branch.

The strike was absolutely solid and no production took place.

The plant is on an industrial estate and lots of passing motorists hooted their support. Strike days are Tuesday and Wednesdays, and there are picket lines out on the gate from 6.30am.

Unite welcomes visiting delegations from trade unionists on the picket lines.

● Please send messages of support to Cheryl.pidgeon@uniteunion.org
James Eaden

LINCOLNSHIRE

More workers set to join Lincolnshire health workers' struggle for pay justice

THE BATTLE over Lincolnshire health workers' pay heats up as more workers are set to vote on whether to join the action.

Unite union general secretary Len McCluskey has slammed Lincolnshire council bosses' "divide and rule" tactics in the long-running health visitors dispute.

McCluskey said health visitors have struck for 32 days since the summer "for fair pay and what is rightfully theirs".

"They have lost over £2,000 a year since being

transferred from the NHS to the county council," he told the annual conference of Unite's Community Practitioners' and Health Visitors' Association section.

"It's a move they never wanted and should never have happened.

He said bosses were "trying divide and rule tactics by splitting the role in two on different grades."

Health visitors were transferred from the NHS to the local authority in October 2017.

They have not received

a pay rise since, even though both NHS and council workers have seen pay deals in that period.

Unite has escalated the dispute by balloting for strikes all of its health visitor members at the local authority.

Workers should start getting ready to take to the picket lines and vote Yes in the ballot, which ends on Friday of this week.

A victory for this low paid, predominately women workforce would be a victory for every trade unionist.

MUSEUMS

Prospect members get set for walkouts

WORKERS AT two sets of museums were set to strike over pay on this week.

Members of the Prospect union at the Science Museum Group and Museum of London are fighting low pay.

Both sets of workers are rejecting paltry pay rises of just 1.5 percent, which is below inflation and effectively a pay cut.

Science Museum sites across Britain were set to strike on Wednesday—their second time this year.

The workers previously



Science Museum workers in August

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

struck for one day at five sites owned by Science Museum Group—in London, Manchester, Bradford, York and Wiltshire—at the end of August.

And workers at Museum London and the Barbican and Dockland sites were set to walk out for half a day on Thursday.
Nick Clark



POSTAL WORKERS used gate meetings to build support for the dispute

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

POST WORKERS READY TO FIGHT

by NICK CLARK

POSTAL WORKERS are working to build support for a possible national strike in Royal Mail following an astonishing strike vote last week.

The workers' CWU union plans "a massive public engagement exercise" to get people to declare, "I support my postal worker."

It could see postal workers out on the streets winning support for their fight to defend Royal Mail—and their jobs and conditions with it.

The campaign comes after CWU members voted by 97 percent in favour of strikes.

Promise

It was a resounding promise to fight bosses' plans to smash up Royal Mail and scrap tens of thousands of jobs.

Chief executive Rico Back wants to split Royal Mail into a new parcels company run for profit, and a letters delivery service that will be run down. That means

taking vital work away from Royal Mail—causing at least 20,000 job losses.

And the union fears Back's ambition to scrap Royal Mail's obligation to deliver letters six days a week will lead to many more.

Those left will be made to work like robots.

Bosses want to use technology such as their handheld delivery devices to monitor everything workers do and find ways to make them work harder.

Meanwhile workers in the parcels company will end up employed on much worse terms and conditions, similar to those in courier services such as DPD or Hermes.

They're paid per delivery—not by the hour—have to pay for their own vans, and often aren't entitled to holiday or sick pay.

Speaking after the strike vote last week, CWU deputy general secretary Terry Pullinger said the issues at stake gave the dispute much broader significance.

"This industry is surrounded by gig economy jobs," he said.

"People who don't get sick



Fire Brigade Union members show solidarity

PICTURE: ANDREW SCATTERGOOD/TWITTER

Bosses will look for any excuse to use the courts to stop action

pay, don't get holiday pay, don't get pensions, pay no national insurance and have to have two or three jobs to survive.

"Someone has to make a stand—who better than this trade union?"

"We're not going to mess about—we're going to have to be deadly serious."

General secretary Dave Ward said the union would not be afraid to pick "the maximum moment" to strike.

"This is the fight of our lives," he said.

Yet the CWU is now locked into a mediation process with bosses that means official action is unlikely to take place until the end of November.

The union and bosses have until the end of this week to consider a report by an external mediator.

The terms of a previous agreement mean they have to set aside two

weeks for negotiations after that. In a message to members, Pullinger said that negotiations with managers suggested they are unlikely to reach an agreement.

But even then, Tory anti-union laws say the union has to give two weeks' notice before a strike.

And bosses will look for any excuse to use the courts to try and stop action.

Postal workers have to be prepared to take unofficial action if bosses run to the courts.

But in any case, the momentum of the ballot campaign can't be lost.

Some union activists are discussing the possibility of a national demonstration.

Paul Garraway, a CWU rep in Oxford, told Socialist Worker, "The problem is we could end up in a lull between the strike result and action."

"A major national demonstration could keep the momentum up and bring posties together."

"And we could use it as part of the campaign to bring the public on side."